

BY: Senator MAY

COMMEMORATING the 50th Anniversary of InterFaith
Works of Central New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those exemplary organizations whose purposeful service strengthens the civic, spiritual, and humanitarian fabric of the communities of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of InterFaith Works of Central New York, headquartered in the City of Syracuse; and

WHEREAS, Founded in 1976 as the Syracuse Area Interreligious Council by a dedicated coalition of faith and civil rights leaders, InterFaith Works began with a clear and urgent calling: to build bridges of understanding among people of different religions and across racial divides; and

WHEREAS, From its first headquarters at Temple Concord on Madison Street in Syracuse, under the early leadership of Rabbi Theodore Levy and Helen Jenks, InterFaith Works has grown from a courageous interreligious undertaking into one of Central New York's most trusted instruments of welcome, reconciliation, and human care; and

WHEREAS, For five decades, InterFaith Works has affirmed the dignity of each person and every faith tradition, built racial and religious equity, and created bridges of understanding among neighbors whose lives, languages, customs, histories, and beliefs enrich the shared life of Syracuse and Central New York; and

WHEREAS, The work of InterFaith Works has evolved with the changing needs of the region while remaining steadfast in its core conviction that difference is not a threat but a source of strength, wisdom, and community; and

WHEREAS, Through its Center for New Americans, InterFaith Works has welcomed refugees, asylees, immigrants, and New American families fleeing war, persecution, famine, political repression, and profound loss, helping them begin again with safety, stability, friendship, and hope; and

WHEREAS, The Center for New Americans provides essential services, including refugee resettlement, English language classes, employment preparation, immigration assistance, medical case management, mental health services, cultural orientation, referrals, and community navigation, thereby helping families not only arrive but belong; and

WHEREAS, Through its Ahmad and Elizabeth El-Hindi Center for Dialogue & Action, InterFaith Works advances racial and social equity

through dialogue, education, relationship building, and action, helping Central New Yorkers face difficult truths, heal painful divisions, and find common ground; and

WHEREAS, Through its Center for Healthy Aging and related programs of companionship, support, and care, InterFaith Works has served older adults, caregivers, elder refugees, isolated neighbors, and those seeking connection, dignity, and community across the later seasons of life; and

WHEREAS, InterFaith Works has also fostered chaplaincy and spiritual care, interfaith dialogue, food justice, community-police conversations, anti-racism initiatives, leadership development, and partnerships among houses of worship, civic institutions, volunteers, employers, schools, service providers, and neighbors; and

WHEREAS, The Round Table of Faith Leaders, representing many faith traditions, stands as a living expression of the organization's founding vision: that religious and moral communities can join across difference to speak with compassion, respond to suffering, and serve the common good; and

WHEREAS, In 2026, as InterFaith Works marks 50 years of service, Syracuse and Central New York celebrate not merely an anniversary but a legacy of people welcomed, families stabilized, elders accompanied, workers employed, faith communities connected, conversations begun, wounds tended, and hope restored; and

WHEREAS, InterFaith Works' 50-year history reminds us that the strength of a community is measured by not only its institutions but also its willingness to make room at the table, to listen across difference, to protect the vulnerable, and to recognize the sacred dignity of every human being; and

WHEREAS, The enduring success of InterFaith Works is due to the vision of its founders, the dedication of its board members and staff, the wisdom of its faith leaders, the generosity of its volunteers and donors, and the courage and resilience of the individuals and families it has served; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting and proper that this Legislative Body honor InterFaith Works of Central New York for 50 years of compassionate service, bridge building, interfaith leadership, racial and religious equity work, and steadfast commitment to the people of Syracuse and Central New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of InterFaith Works of Central New York and to commend all those associated with this vital organization for their extraordinary contributions to the dignity, unity, and well-being of the people of this great Empire State; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be

transmitted to InterFaith Works of Central New York.